

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-10 /102 W  
----- 014135 /53

P R 151709Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8782  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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GENEVA FOR WISNER

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE DECEMBER 15 EDITION OF THE FINANCIAL TIMES UNDER THE TITLE, "WHAT BRITAIN CAN DO IN RHODESIA".  
BEGIN TEXT: MR. ANTHONY CROSLAND, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, CLAIMS THAT HE IS STILL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES OF SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDING THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF RHODESIA. HE MAY HAVE GROUNDS FOR HIS OPTIMISM, OVER AND ABOVE THE OBLIGATORY CHEERFULNESS WHICH IS INCUMBENT DURING ANY NEGOTIATION, JUST SO LONG AS THAT NEGOTIATION HAS NOT IRREVOCABLY BROKEN DOWN. BUT IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THE RECORD OF SEVEN WEEKS OF NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA IS, ON THE FACE OF IT, VERY ENCOURAGING.  
THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR HAS BEEN A NOTIONAL AGREEMENT ON A TARGET DATE OF MARCH 1, 1978, FOR THE MOVE TO FULL INDEPENDENCE UNDER MAJORITY RULE. THIS WAS PREDI-

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CATED, HOWEVER, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WOULD BE

RAPID AGREEMENT ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES RELATING TO THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. ON THESE THE VARIOUS DELEGATIONS HAVE PUT FORWARD THEIR DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW, BUT THERE HAS NOT, SO FAR, BEEN ANY REAL NEGOTIATION OR ANY MOVEMENT.

THE SLOWNESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SO FAR HAS BEEN PARTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE DIVISIONS AND DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE FOUR BLACK RHODESIAN DELEGATIONS, PARTLY TO THE PROFOUND CHASM OF MISTRUST WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE BLACKS AND THE WHITES. IF THERE IS TO BE A MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT IN GENEVA, THERE MUST FIRST BE A MUCH GREATER DEGREE OF COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE BLACK DELEGATIONS, AND THIS WILL IN TURN DEPEND VERY LARGELY ON WHETHER THE FIVE FRONT-LINE BLACK PRESIDENTS ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO BRING THEM CLOSER TOGETHER. SINCE THE FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS ARE THEMSELVES LESS THAN UNITED, IT IS NOT OBVIOUS THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO UNITE THE BLACK DELEGATIONS IN GENEVA.

THE ONE REALLY SIGNIFICANT SHIFT THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE GENEVA TALKS OPENED HAS BEEN IN THE RELATIVE ROLES BEING ASSUMED BY THE U.S. AND BRITAIN. DR. HENRY KISSINGER PLAYED A CRUCIAL PART IN PRECIPITATING THE HOLDING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WHILE THE U.S. WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE, EVEN UNDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF MR. JIMMY CARTER, TO TAKE A CLOSE AND ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE RHODESIA AFFAIR, IT IS FROM NOW ON MORE LIKELY TO BE AS A FRIEND OF THE COURT THAN AS A CENTRAL PARTICIPANT. BY CONTRAST, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS MOVED A LONG WAY TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEMAND PUT FORWARD BY ALL THE BLACK DELEGATIONS, THAT THE U.K. HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN RHODESIA DURING THE TRANSITION TO FULL INDEPENDENCE.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8783

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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JUST HOW FAR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO GO IN ACCEPTING A DIRECT ROLE IN RHODESIA IS STILL UNCLEAR; THIS IS DOUBTLESS ONE OF THE CENTRAL POINTS WHICH MR. IVOR RICHARD WILL BE DISCUSSING DURING HIS THREE-WEEK SHUTTLE AROUND SOUTHERN AFRICA AFTER CHRISTMAS. BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE OPTIONS NOW BEING CONSIDERED RELATE TO AN ESSENTIALLY CIVILIAN ROLE, IF ONLY BECAUSE NONE OF THE BLACK DELEGATIONS HAS ASKED FOR A MILITARY PRESENCEWM

IT IS DEBATABLE WHETHER A CIVILIAN PESENCE--FOR EXAMPLE A GOVERNO-GENERAL WITH HIS STAFF--COULD PERFORM MORE THAN A PURELY MTAL ROLE. AT ZEST, HE WOULD HAVE THE FUNCTITN OF A CHAIRMAN OF A PERMANENT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE, WHOSE AUTHORITY RESTS ULTIMATELY ON HIS SUCCESS IN SECURING THE COOPERATION OF THE TWO SIDES HE WOULD CERTAINLY BE IN NO POSITION TO IMPOSE HIS DECISIONS.

EVEN IF THE GENEVA TALKS WERE TO END IN AGREEMENT, THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS, AND THE ROLE OF A BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE COULD ONLY BE UNGRATEFUL. BUT IF IT IS ACCEPTED THAT THE ONLY CONTRIBUTION BRITAIN CAN MAKE IS THAT OF A MORAL ARBITRATOR, IT SHOULD ALSO BE ACCEPTED THAT HIS CONTRIBUTION CAN PROVE EFFECTIVE ONLY IF BOTH BLACK AND WHITE IN RHODESIA GENUINELY WANT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. END TEXT

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